

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 15623 01 OF 02 291527Z

45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00

ACDA-05 SCCT-01 EB-07 SCA-01 SY-05 DHA-02 USIE-00

/103 W

----- 051184

O R 291332Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7882

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 15623 01 OF 02 291527Z

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 15623

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: POLITICAL MANEUVERS TO THE FORE

REF: BEIRUT 15580 (1056Z)

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A WEEKEND OF SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SECURITY CONDITIONS IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY, BEHIND-THE-SCENE CONSULTATIONS AND BARGAINING DOMINATE THE SCENE IN LEBANON. APPARENT SERIOUSNESS OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING, WHICH BEARS SYRIAN IMPRIMATEUR, LEADS TO CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT COUNTRY MAY BE ENDURING PERIOD OF RELATIVE CALM SOMEWHAT LESS BRITTLE THAN END-OF-THE-MONTH "PAY-DAY TRUCE" WHICH OCCURRED IN LATE NOVEMBER. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS WIDELY RECONGIZED THAT PROCESS OF PUTTING LEBANESE HUMPTY-DUMPTY TOGETHER AGAIN WILL BE LONG, DRAWN OUT AFFAIR FRAUGHT WITH CONSTANT DANGER OF REVERSALS OR EVEN COLLAPSE. END SUMMARY.

2. GUARDEDLY UPBEAT MOOD IN LEBANON FIRST NOTED DEC 27 CONTINUED OVER WEEKEND WITH SECURITY CONDITIONS IMPROVING AND COUNTRY EXPERIENCING DEC 29 GREATEST DEGREE OF CALM SINCE DEC 6 DOWNTURN. HIGHER COORDINATION COMMITTEE MET TWICE DEC 28 AND ESTIMATED THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE ARMED MEN HAD ABANDONED STREETS OF CAPITAL; COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL MEET AGAIN DEC 29 IN CONTINUING EFFORTS TO BETTER THAT PERFORMANCE. BEIRUT RADIO THIS MORNING REFLECTS IMPROVED CONDITIONS ABOUT TOWN, BUT CONTINUES TO COVER ITSELF BY URGING CAUTION IN USING CITY STREETS, AS MINOR INCIDENTS, INCLUDING EXCHANGES OF FIRE BY DARK, CONTINUE. ZAHLE AND OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE REPORTED QUIET.

3. WITH SAFETY OF LIFE AND LIMB A SOMEWHAT LESS COMPELLING PREOCCUPATION, CITIZENRY IS TURNING ITS ATENTION TO ONGOING POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MANY REGARD AS HOLDING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 15623 01 OF 02 291527Z

OUT PROMISE FOR EVENTUAL ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN WARRING FACTIONS. KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS HAVE GENERALLY AGREED THAT DOCUEMENT EMBODYING FIVE POINTS IS AT CENTER OF POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AND IS RESPONSIBLE IN LARGE PART FOR QUIESCENCE OF ARMED FACTIONS. AS PIECED TOGETHER BY THESE SOURCES, BROAD OUTLINES OF PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) EQUAL CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM REPRESENTATION IN THE

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES;

(B) NOMINATION BY SIMPLE MAJORITY OF CHAMBER OF PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE WHO WOULD THEN BE APPOINTED BY PRES;

(C) CREATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL TO FORMULATE AND OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS AND MEASURES IN THESE AREAS;

(D) ESTABLISHMENT OF A HIGH COURT (PROVIDED FOR IN CONSTITUTION BUT NEVER CREATED) WHICH WOULD HAVE JURISDICTION OVER CASES, INCLUDING TREASON, AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE; AND

(E) ELIMINATING CONFESSIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON SENIOR POSITIONS WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

4. PARENTAGE OF THESE PROPOSALS IS SOMEWHAT DUBIOUS. ACCORDING TO SOME SOURCES, THEY REPRESENT THE DISTILLATION OF SYRIAN THINKING BASED UPON RECENT VISIT BY CHIEF OF STAFF SHIHABI AND CONSULTATIONS WITH VARIOUS LEBANESE LUMINARIES IN DAMASCUS. OTHER OBSERVERS CLAIM THAT THEY WERE MIDWIVED BY SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY "COMMITTEE OF INITIATIVE" AND NOTE SOME SIMILARITIES TO WORKING PAPER PUBLISHED BY THAT BODY ON DEC 19. FINALLY, IT IS ALLEGED BY SOME THAT PRIMO KARAME IS THE AUTHOR OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH HE LEFT WITH THE SYRIANS TO BE REGURGITATED TO PRES FRANGIE AND OTHER CHRISTIAN LEADERS INDIRECTLY. INEAGE, HOWEVER, IS NOT RPT NOT AS RELEVANT AS EXISTENCE OF SOME BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND EVENTUAL NEGOTIATION AND GROWING CONVICTION THAT THESE PROPOSALS STAND GOOD CHANCE OF ACHIEVING NEAR-TOTAL ACCEPTANCE.

5. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME INDICATIONS THAT MARONITES, PARTICULARLY THE PHALANGE, ARE READY TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF SIMILAR "CONCESSIONS" PROVIDED THEY RECEIVE WHAT THEY CONSIDER ADEQUATE "GUARANTEES" RE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 15623 01 OF 02 291527Z

CHRISTIAN RIGHTS. PRES FRANGIE ALSO MAY BE INCLINED TO MAKE SOME GESTURES TOWARD MUSLIM DEMANDS, ALTHOUGH HE IS ASSUREDLY RECEIVING CONTRADICTORY ADVICE FROM HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATIONS AND HIS EVENTUAL FLEXIBILITY IS HARD TO DEFINE AT THIS TIME. WHAT DOES NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO BE IN DOUBT IS SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR REFORMS ALONG THESE LINES AND CONTACTS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND PRES FRANGIE CONTINUE ON A REGULAR BASIS, EITHER TO WHIP FRANGIE INTO LINE OR TO STRENGTHEN HIS RESOLVE TO COME TO TERMS. LUCIEN DAHDAH, WHOM FRANGIE DISPATCHED LAST WEEK AS HIS PERSONAL EMISSARY TO THE SYRIAN REGIME, HAS REPORTEDLY TRAVELLED SECRETLY TO THE SYRIAN CAPITAL ONCE AGAIN TO SEEK "CLARIFICATION" OF SOME PROPOSALS WHICH FRANGIE IS NOT YET PREPARED TO SWALLOW. WE UNDERSTAND FRANGIE IS AGAIN SINGING HIS FAVORITE REFRAIN ABOUT NOT ENTERING THE HISTORY BOOKS AS THE

PRES WHO SURRENDERED CHRISTIAN PREROGATIVES AND IS
ALLEGEDLY ARGUING THAT, WITH HIS TERM IN ITS FINAL MONTHS,
SUCH FAR-REACHING CHANGES SHOULD BE LEFT FOR HIS SUCCESSOR.
HE IS ALSO CASTING ABOUT FOR MARONITE CHRISTIAN COVER FOR ANY
BARGAIN HE MAY DECIDE TO STRIKE AND PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE
GEMAYEL HAS RECENTLY CALLED FOR AN URGENT MEETING WITH
CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND CHARBEL KASSIS, HEAD OF THE MARONITE
MONKS. THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT GEMAYEL'S REQUEST IS
RELATED TO THE PRESIDENT'S DESIRE FOR MARONITE SUPPORT IN
NEGOTIATIONS AND CONCLAVE WILL, IN ANY CASE, CERTAINLY ATTEMPT
TO ALIGN MARONITE STRATEGY IN FACE OF QUICKENING POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 15623 02 OF 02 291537Z

45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00

ACDA-05 SCCT-01 EB-07 SCA-01 SY-05 DHA-02 USIE-00

/103 W

----- 051263

O R 291332Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7883

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
COMMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 15623 02 OF 02 291537Z

DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 15623

6. WE BELIEVE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THIS QUICKENING PACE AT THIS MOMENT IS GENUINE CONCERN OF BOTH SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS THAT LEBANON NOT RPT NOT BE IN THROES OF OPEN AND BLOODY CONFESSIONAL CONFLICT AT MOMENT WHEN UN SECURITY COUNCIL OPENS ITS DEBATE ON JAN 12. BOTH DAMASCUS AND PLO "MODERATES" HAVE GREAT STAKE IN THIS DEBATE WHICH WOULD BE SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, WERE EVENTS IN LEBANON TO PUT THE LIE TO THE FEASIBILITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC, SECULAR STATE CONCEPT. THIS CONSIDERATION, COMBINED WITH WHAT WE CONTINUE TO REGARD AS THE DESIRE OF THESE TWO PARTIES TO SEE SOME NEW ACCOMMODATION IN LEBANESE POLITICAL SYSTEM, HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY PLAYED A ROLE IN THE LATEST PUSH FOR CALM AND POLITICAL COMPROMISE. PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHICH MET IN DAMASCUS AT BEGINNING OF LAST WEEK DISCUSSED LEBANESE SITUATION AND TACTICS FOR UPCOMING SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT ASSEMBLED DELEGATES FAILED TO DISCERN THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE TWO. WE DO NOT YET HAVE A FIRM READOUT ON THE SPECIFICS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE DECISIONS, BUT EVIDENCE IS GROWING THAT PLO "MODERATES" HAVE BEEN SITTING OVER LAST WEEK ON SOME MORE RECALCITRANT FACTIONS OF THE "PROGRESSIVE-LEFTIST" COTERIE.

7. SYRIANS ARE NOT ONLY ARAB STATES TURNING THEIR ATTENTION TO LEBANESE SITUATION AS POLITICAL BREW BEGINS TO BUBBLE. LEBANESE PRESS DEC 29 PROMINENTLY FEATURES PRESS CONFERENCE DEC 28 BY ARAB LEAGUE SYG MAHMOUD RIAD IN WHICH RIAD ANNOUNCED HIS INITIATIVE TO SOLICIT COMMON ARAB ACTION TO RELIEVE CONDITIONS OF CIVIL STRIFE IN LEBANON. THE IRAQI REGIME HAS TAKEN AN EVEN MORE DIRECT INITIATIVE IN THE COUNTRY BY SENDING MININFO TARIQ AZIZ AND BAATH PARTY NATIONAL

COUNCIL MEMBER 'ALI GHANNAM (FBIS JN241712Y AND JN241714Y) TO BEAT THE PAVEMENT IN BEIRUT WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN CALLING UPON LOCAL NOTABLES. BOTH EFFORTS APPEAR FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT TO BE UNCONNECTED WITH MAIN SHOW REVOLVING AROUND SYRIAN PUSH AND COULD PROVE TO BE COM-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 15623 02 OF 02 291537Z

PLICATING FACTORS. FIRST INDICATION OF SYRIAN RESPONSE WE HAVE SEEN APPEARED IN BEIRUT DAILY, "ASH SHARQ" (WHICH GENERALLY REFLECTS THINKING IN DAMASCUS) ON DEC 29. PAPER SUGGESTED BAGHDAD MORE INTERESTED IN ASSURING THAT NEXT PRES OF LEBANON IS PRO-IRAQI THAN SOLVING LEBNAESE CRISIS AND ALSO TOOK SWIPE AT RIAD. WHILE LOCAL PICTURE LOOKS SOMEWHAT BRIGHTER AND MORE PROMISING, THEREFORE, IT SHOULD BE WORKING ASSUMPTION BY THIS TIME IN LEBANESE CRISIS THAT INGREDIENTS OF FURTHER DISASTER PERSIST AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY A SLIP REMAIN.

8. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY REMAINS LIGHT. LABOR LEADERS OVER WEEKEND CALLED FOR OPENING OF BANKS FOR PAYMENT OF DECEMBER SALARIES AND END-OF-THE-YEAR BONUSES; HOWEVER, BANKERS' ASSOCIATION HAS SAID BANKS WILL REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL SECURITY IMPROVES. WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS CAUSED BY DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS, FOOD SUPPLIES REMAIN ADEQUATE IN MOST PARTS OF BEIRUT. WEEKEND STORM CAUSED ELECTRICAL OUTAGES, BUT CREWS APPARENTLY HAVE MADE NECESSARY REPAIRS.

9. STORM ALSO DAMAGED JETTIES AT IPC TERMINAL IN TRIPOLI, AND NEXT TANKER SHIP OF GASOLINE AND GAS OIL MAY BE DELAYED SEVERAL DAYS. PETROLEUM MINISTER TUEINI IS MEETING TODAY WITH OIL COMPANY OFFICIALS TO TRY TO ARRANGE RELAY SYSTEM OF CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM DRIVERS TO ALLOW TANK TRUCKS TO MAKE FUEL OIL DELIVERIES FROM EXISTING STOCKS AT DORA PORT TO RAS BEIRUT, WHICH CONTINUES TO LACK HEAT AND HOT WATER. TAPLINE BEGAN DEC 27 TO PUMP CRUDE TO MEDRECO REFINERY, WHOSE CRUDE WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED BY THE END OF THE YEAR. AS "LOCAL AUTHORITIES" IN SIDON DEMAND THAT MEDRECO PRODUCTION BE DISTRIBUTED IN SOUTH, BEIRUT IS RECEIVING ONLY ONE-TWO TANK TRUCKS DAILY FROM MEDRECO. IN SHORT, MANY PARTS OF BEIRUT ARE LIKELY TO FACE ANOTHER COLD WEEK.
GODLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PROGRESS REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT15623
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750448-1077
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975129/aaaaahjg.tel
Line Count: 324
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 15580
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL MANEUVERS TO THE FORE
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006